

Return to Use Initiative

2006 Demonstration Project

Yeoman Creek: Waukegan, Illinois

THE SITE: The 70-acre Yeoman Creek Superfund site was a waste disposal site from 1959 until 1978, and includes three landfills: Yeoman Creek Landfill, Edwards Field Landfill, and Rubloff Landfill. The landfills are now owned by the Waukegan School District and the Waukegan Park District, with some portions of the site held in private trusts. The landfills were not lined to prevent contamination from migrating, and contaminated leachate has been seeping into Yeoman Creek since 1969. The selected remedy called for installing a flexible landfill cover over all of the waste on-site, a landfill gas collection system, excavating sediment on-site, monitoring groundwater, sediments, and air, and also included and consolidating sediments and soils under the cover on-site.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Although major construction activities were finished in 2005, the site remained vacant and unutilized. The City of Waukegan and Waukegan School District would like to see the site used for passive recreation and community gardens.

THE BARRIERS: Members of the Yeoman Creek Remediation Group (YCRG) are not in agreement about the future use of the site. While some members believe the site's Record of Decision and Consent Decree support recreational reuse at the site, other members have said the Consent Decree would have to be modified in order for recreational uses to be permitted. BFI, one of the Potentially Responsible Parties for the site, has expressed concerns about remediation costs and liability issues associated with potential future uses of the site.

THE SOLUTION: Region 5 solicited input from a contractor team familiar with facilitating dialogues between stakeholders and overcoming barriers associated with the reuse of Superfund sites. The facilitation team presented EPA with a number of next steps, including clarifying land-use planning authority. EPA will work with local stakeholders to ensure that there are appropriate and effective institutional controls in place at the site that accommodate reuse while remaining protective. Using experience gained at other sites, such as the H.O.D. Landfill, a 2004 Return to Use demonstration project, EPA is exploring ways to address potential liability concerns at the site.

THE SITE NOW: EPA will continue to facilitate discussions among stakeholders and YCRG members in order to determine potential challenges to reuse and ultimately, solutions to these challenges that will return the site to use in a manner that is consistent with the site's cleanup decision documents.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Tom Bloom, Region 5 Superfund Redevelopment Coordinator, at (312) 886-1967 or bloom.thomas@epa.gov.

Barriers:

Communication difficulties between stakeholders; liability concerns

Solution:

Encouraging and facilitating open discussion between stakeholders; identifying decision-making authorities

Before:

Underutilized landfills in an area seeking new recreational opportunities

After:

New recreational possibilities